

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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[Price 1s.]

" Sir ; We feel great pleasure and satisfaction in conveying to you, in the name of the Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, Householders, and other Inhabitants of the County of Berks, in full County assembled, their sentiments of gratitude and attachment for your generous exertions in defending the cause of the poor, the helpless and the oppressed ; for your unwearied endeavours in exposing and attacking corruption and abuses in the Navy, the Army, and the State ; for your unabated zeal upon all occasions, in maintaining with firmness the Liberty, Property and Rights of the People, in opposition to the pernicious System which is undermining and destroying the Country ; and, above all, for your unremitted efforts to obtain a full, fair, free and equal Representation of the People in Parliament, which, more than any language in your Letter to your Constituents, the Electors of Westminster, have excited the acrimony of all those who, by participating in the misplaced millions of their country, naturally rank you among their enemies. In you we have had an upright and honest man—a firm, zealous and inflexible friend to our free Constitution, as by law established.—We are, Sir, with the greatest respect and sincerity, your obliged, humble servants, &c."—ADDRESS OF THE COUNTY OF BERKS to Sir Francis Burdett, passed at the County Meeting held at Reading, 5th June, 1810.

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SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

BERKSHIRE MEETING.—The account of the whole of the proceedings at this Meeting will be found in another part of this Number, and I hope, that no one of my readers will lay down the paper, till he has gone through every word of that account. —The *petitions*, which were agreed to, will be published either in this number or in the next ; but, to judge of the sentiments of the county, we want nothing more than the *Address to Sir Francis Burdett*, which I have taken as a motto, and which does equal honour to the party addressing and the party addressed.—When Mr. Percival and Mr. Canning and Sir Vicary Gibbs and Mr. Lethbridge and Sir Robert Salusbury were carrying on the work of getting Sir Francis into a prison, they did not, I imagine, anticipate that the consequence would be Addresses to him from Cities and Counties, carried up by Sheriffs, members of Parliament, and gentlemen of great property.—To be sure, a more severe mortification to them cannot well be conceived, than this Address from the County of Berks, moved by such a man as SIR JOHN THROGMORTON, and supported by other gentlemen so respectable in every point of view ; and it is hard to conceive any thing more honourable, more encouraging, more *heart-cheering*, to Sir Francis Burdett himself. Here it is ; it is in this way, and in this way alone, that he can receive his reward for so many years of anxious toil for the public good. —Now, what will those persons say, who, just after he was lodged in the Tower, asserted, that "even his friends had disclaimed him?" What will be now said

and thought by the mean and dastardly wretch, who, when he thought danger was approaching, was the first to give the signal of desertion ? What is now become of all the predictions of the hireling prints, that nobody would any longer have the boldness to *defend* the conduct of Sir Francis ? And what are we now to think of the judgment of Mr. Ponsonby, who said, that he did *not believe*, that the people of Westminster would, if the occasion were offered them, *re-elect* Sir Francis ? Really, it does not appear, that Mr. Canning having withdrawn his "*good opinion*" from Sir Francis, has done the latter's character any harm. It has not ruined him in the opinion of the nation.—Those who thought that sending Sir Francis to the Tower would *sink* him in the eyes of the nation have now been proved to be wise men indeed. But, the "*gentlemen opposite*" must not pretend, that they had *no hand in the work*. They did not, indeed, vote for the Tower ; but, they proposed a *reprimand* ; and who is fool enough to suppose, that Sir Francis would have received that reprimand without such an answer as would have compelled the House to do *something further* ; unless, indeed, they chose to submit to him upon the spot ?—Therefore, it is all a mere pretence ; it is an attempt at deception for the OUTS to say, that they had no hand in the Tower project. They most heartily lent their hands to prepare the way. They condemned, in language the most bitter, the Address of Sir Francis to his Constituents ; they even censured the ministers for not being prompt enough in executing the warrant ; and, when Sir Francis was in the Tower, they boldly come forward to "*rally round His*

"*Majesty's government*," the persons composing which they had, only a few days before, denominated the *Demon of England*; Yea, verily, in opposition to the principles of Sir Francis Burdett, they were ready to rally round even "the Demon of England!" Let them, therefore, hold their peace. Let them take their full share of the reproach tacitly passed upon the enemies of Sir Francis, in the Address of the county of Berks. The three persons, who distinguished themselves most in speaking against the principles of Sir Francis were Messrs. *Adam, Anstruther* (late *Indian Judge*) and *Ponsonby*; and the second of them was one of the first to give the word for "rallying round His Majesty's government," after Sir Francis was safely lodged in the Tower, and after the army and the cannons were arrived in town. Let us therefore hear no more from the OUTS in the way of censure on the INS for having sent Sir Francis to the Tower, and thereby roused the nation to resent his wrongs.—The notion was, that the committing of him to the Tower would *degrade* him. It was thought, that, though a few persons might be loud in their complaints, the nation in general would quietly acquiesce, seeing so large a majority in the House against him; and, that, as the world but too frequently think the worse of a man the moment he is within the walls of a prison, the measure would tend to *lower* the great object of their fear. This was the notion that prevailed amongst those, who were for sending Sir Francis to prison. How have they been deceived! What must their fears be *now*? They are rightly served. But, they have, as yet, experienced only a small part of their mortification.—It has generally been the case, that those who have been the means of doing their country great services have, at first, been objects of censure and abuse, on the part of those who were interested in the supporting of tyrannical measures. There was hardly a man, who largely contributed towards the putting down of the House of STUART, who was not at some time or other, in prison. But, the FIVE BISHOPS, who were arbitrarily committed to the very prison where Sir Francis now is, by JAMES II, lived to see that bigot, fool, and despot driven from his throne, in terror of the very troops, upon whom he had relied for the support of his despotic government; and, WILLIAM PENN, who was almost spitten upon by the bloody JEFFREYS,

who sent him back to prison, though acquitted by a jury, lived to be the founder of the brightest Province in the world, lived to make laws for the government of a nation, while that bloody Jeffreys, though for a while successful and though loaded with riches and titles, ended his days a fugitive from the hands of justice, covered with the contempt, as he formerly had been with the curses, of the nation.* One would suppose, that examples of this being so numerous, and especially in our own history, would teach men in power to reflect well before they resorted to the use of that power for purposes like that now immediately before us. If, indeed, it could have been contrived to persuade the nation, that Sir Francis had really committed some *offence*, worthy of imprisonment, the imprisonment would have had great effect against him. But, this was impossible. Nobody could believe this; and, indeed, it was next to impossible, that the public in general should not, like the county of Berks, be convinced, that his having resolved to urge, with all his might, a Parliamentary Reform, was his great offence in the eyes of those who were the most bitter against him.—That this Meeting in Berkshire will lead to others there can be no doubt; but, as I observed, in a late Number, the people are so *kept asunder*, in the country, that their being slow to meet, upon any occasion is not wonderful. County-Meetings for Addresses of another description are as unerring as the Sun. The Secretary of the Treasury has nothing to do but to write a circular letter, and there assemble, in every county, some dozen and a half of placemen, tax-gatherers and dependent parsons, and the thing is done as quietly as the business of a meeting of Trustees to a Turnpike Road. There have been many a score of County-meetings without even the inhabitants of the towns,

* The Trial of PENN and MEAD, and that of BUSHELL, the Juryman, should be read by every Englishman, and he should make his sons read them, as soon as they are able to comprehend what they read.—The conduct of these three men cannot fail to inspire, in every youth, useful emulation. The noble stand, which they made against the tyrants of their day, was founded, too, precisely upon those principles, for which the people of England, with Sir Francis Burdett at their head, are now contending.

where they were held, knowing what was going forward. And yet, such meetings as these are, by some, asserted to express *the sense of the country!*—One of the arguments, the other day, against *Reform*, was, that it was called for by nothing but a *low, degraded, impotent, contemptible crew*. Will those, who made use of that argument, repeat it? Will they stick to that doctrine to the upshot? Will they continue thus to abuse the nation? I rather think they will become a little more modest before it be long.—The petition, relative to Sir Francis Burdett and Mr. Gale Jones, agreed to at this Meeting, has, it appears from the reports in the newspapers, been *rejected* by the Honourable House! and, one of the reasons stated, is, that it accuses the House of having caused the *shedding of innocent blood*. Mr. Whitbread and Sir Samuel Romilly contended, that the accusation was to be applied to the *ministers only*, who had employed the *military force* in executing the orders of the House; and they, as well as some other members, strongly condemned the rejection of the petition.—Upon this occasion Mr. Yorke seems to have made his appearance again, and to have thrown the innocent blood *upon Sir Francis Burdett*, forgetting, doubtless, that this was attempted without success, the next day after Sir Francis was lodged in the Tower.—As to the rejection of the petition, it is, however, a thing, in itself, of no consequence at all. The *Address* of the County of Berks, to Sir Francis Burdett, will be *received!* That is the thing of most consequence; and, indeed, since the Honourable House is apt to chafe and fret at the presenting of petitions of this sort, would it not be as well for other counties and public bodies to leave the Honourable House quietly to itself, and *content themselves with Addresses to Sir Francis*, or with remonstrances to him, if they should think his conduct wrong? At any rate, it appears to me, that a paper of some sort, addressed *to him*, should be signed at every meeting. He is now become the corner stone of the cause. This character has been forced upon him by his and the people's enemies; and, therefore, we must either stand by him, or give up the cause, the latter of which, I trust, we shall not do.

ROCHESTER MEETING.—A very numerous and respectable Meeting has been held in the City of Rochester, and have *unanimously agreed to petition the Ho-*

nourable House to retrace its steps with respect to Mr. Gale Jones and Sir Francis Burdett, and to adopt measures for a Reform in the Representation of the people. At this Meeting, which, it would seem, the Mayor would not call, some excellent sentiments were expressed. Indeed, there is but one way of *thinking*, whatever there may be of talking, in the whole kingdom. That light, which, after long struggling against darkness, burst in upon the metropolis in February 1809, through the opening made by Mr. Wardle, has now reached even the most obscure and remote corners of the kingdom. Every soul understands the whole of the question of "*Privilege*" and of *Parliamentary Reform*. The history of the *Plymouth Tinman* and that of the *Seat-Sellers* have been compared by every body. The thing is every where understood. There is no *new* information wanting; and, indeed, nothing is wanting but for the people to settle upon what is now the best way for them to ACT in order to obtain, legally and constitutionally, redress of their grievances.

WESTMINSTER ABHORRERS.—In my last I noticed a long Declaration, which had been published, or, at least, drawn up by certain Abhorrrers in Westminster; but, it was without any signatures.—Since that the following has appeared, and has been published in the newspapers, in an advertisement.—It seems to me to be, at once, the most foolish as well as the most wicked thing of the kind that ever was seen or heard of. This is, indeed, a pretty use to put *vestry-rooms* and *churches* to.—This GERRARD ANDREWES, by whom the Declaration is signed, is one of those gentry who, about London, are called *Popular Preachers*, or *Gospel Ministers*.—His Advertisement is in the following words:—"Parish of St. James, Westminster, "June 2, 1810.—At a Meeting of the "Rector, Vestrymen and Churchwardens, "of this Parish, duly assembled in Vestry "this day, it was moved, seconded and "unanimously resolved, That the under "written Declaration be signed by the "Vestrymen present, and that the same "shall afterwards lie in the Vestry Room "of this Parish Church, from *twelve* till "four o'clock each day (Sunday ex- "cepted) for the Signatures of such of the "Inhabitant Householders of this Parish "as may approve thereof, "GERRARD ANDREWES, Rector, Chairman. "We, the undersigned, Members of "Vestry, and other resident Householders

“ in the parish of St. James, within the
 “ Liberty of Westminster, in the county
 “ of Middlesex, feel that we should ma-
 “ nifest an unbecoming supineness amidst
 “ the *dangerous principles*, which are now
 “ encouraged and propagated by *factionous*
 “ *individuals*, if we did not openly declare
 “ in contradiction to those Principles, our
 “ unshaken purpose to uphold the Consti-
 “ tution, as by Law established.—At a
 “ time, when a sanguinary and vindictive
 “ enemy has subjugated nearly the whole
 “ of Europe, and threatens to add this
 “ happy Island to the number of his con-
 “ quests, we cannot but think, that this of
 “ all others is the moment to add strength
 “ to the Empire by *promoting public union*.
 “ As long as we continue firm and united
 “ we must, under Providence, be invinci-
 “ ble; for such is our insulated situation,
 “ and such are our resources, that if ever
 “ we are ruined, it will be *by civil division*;
 “ by that *intestine strife, which preys upon*
 “ *our vitals*, and withers the sinews of Go-
 “ vernment.—Sensible too, as we deeply
 “ are of the many invaluable blessings
 “ we have so long enjoyed as a free
 “ and independent people, we must ex-
 “ press our abhorrence of those attempts,
 “ which, by *calumniating the character*,
 “ and *attacking the undoubted privileges of*
 “ the House of Commons, have a direct
 “ tendency, as it appears to us, to shake
 “ the very foundations of civil liberty and
 “ of social order.—We should be as eager
 “ as any to resist the least encroachment
 “ upon the Freedom of the subject; but
 “ we cannot countenance opinions, which,
 “ under the mask of Patriotism, must in-
 “ vitably *promote confusion, paralyze our ef-*
 “ *forts* against the common enemy, and,
 “ in all probability, ultimately subvert
 “ that happy Constitution which has for
 “ so many ages been the envy of Foreign
 “ Nations, and the glory of our own.—Im-
 “ pressed as we are with these sentiments,
 “ we feel ourselves called upon to avow
 “ them publicly at the present crisis;
 “ under the conviction that nothing can so
 “ effectually defeat and *crush the present*
 “ *desperate faction*, as the undisguised de-
 “ claration of all good subjects, that they
 “ will support the Rights of Parliament,
 “ and maintain the integrity and PU-
 “ RITY of the Constitution.”—Now,
 Mr. GERARD ANDREWES, Gospel Minister,
 what are these “ dangerous principles,” of
 which you are afraid, and which, as you
 so boldly assert, proceed from “ *factionous*
 “ *individuals*?” In what do these prin-

ciples appear? In our complaining that
 men have been *imprisoned during pleasure*,
 without oath made against them, without
 warrant from a sworn magistrate, and
 without it being intended ever to bring
 them before a jury? Is there any thing so
 very *dangerous* in this complaint? Is there
 any thing here so very dangerous to the
 constitution? Is there any thing in this,
 which only says that we wish men to be
tried before they are punished; is there any
 thing in this, that shows that our prin-
 ciples are dangerous?—Aye; but we go
 further. So we do. We wish to put an
 effectual stop to the trafficking in Seats in
 Parliament; we wish to put an end to the
 drunkenness, lying, false-swearing and
 bribery, at Elections; and, pray, Mr.
 Gospel Minister, what very great danger do
 you see in that? You are, you tell your
 brother Abhorrrers, for supporting the
 “ *purity*” of the constitution; and, *against*
whom? Against whom is it, Gospel Mi-
 nister, that you would support this purity?
 Why, it is against those, who returned Sir
 Francis Burdett to parliament, without a
 farthing of expence on his part; against
 those who call for justice upon public-
 robbers; against those who complain that
 when two of the ministers, and privy coun-
 sellors were accused of trafficking in
 Seats, the House refused to enquire into
 the matter: it is, Gospel Minister, against
 such men, that you wish to support the
purity of the constitution, and, knowing
 this, it is by no means difficult to guess at
 what you mean when you are talking of
purity.—I tell thee what, Gospel Mini-
 ster, we complain, besides, that we are,
 at this very moment, called upon to assist
 the “ *poorer clergy*” with the sum of
 100,000*l.* and that this is not the first time
 we have been so called upon, while the
 very minister, who demands the money,
 acknowledges, that *more than one half of*
thy brethren, the BENEFICED clergy, do
not reside upon their livings, or do the duties
attached to them, though we know, that they
 could not hold livings without having so-
 lemnly declared, that they felt themselves
 called by the Holy Ghost to take upon them
 the ministry of the Gospel.—Ah! we are
 sad dogs, to complain of this, are we not?
 We must be bitter enemies to the inte-
 grity and “ *purity*” of the constitution,
 must we not? We must be resolutely bent
 upon shaking the foundations of *civil li-*
berly and social order, must we not?—Oh!
 we are a sad “ *desperate faction*,” to expose
 as we did, the nakedness of brother Bowles

and brother *Beazely* and brother *O'Meara*! A sad factious crew to complain that brother *BEAZELY* (who, by the by, was a *Popular Preacher* too and a *Gospel Minister*) lay so snugly behind the church after offering a bribe of 3,000*l.* when the poor ignorant Tinman had been fined and imprisoned for offering a bribe of 2,000*l.* A sad desperate faction to laugh at the loyal John Bowles's accounts and computations. A sad desperate faction to expose the loyal Dr. O'Meara, who, *through the interest of a punk*, got permission to preach before royalty, and who took that occasion to *inveigh against factious principles*. We are even wicked enough to remember this conduct in Dr. O'Meara; and, when we hear any other loyal priest talking in the same strain, we take leave to entertain very serious doubts as to his sincerity. —But it seems, you are afraid of Buonaparté, and think that in order to prevent him from adding England to the rest of his conquests, it is necessary “to *promote public union*,” seeing that it is, in your opinion, only by “*civil division*” that we can be ruined. And so, you think, then, of course, that *the most likely way to promote public union is to get some, at least, of your parishioners to sign a Declaration against the rest*, to set some of them, at least, at variance with others of them; and, in order the more effectually to promote *union* and make it *durable*, you are for having the names of some of your parishioners written down in a book, where all the world may see them. In a word, in order to promote *public union*, you are for calling out one part of the people to “*defeat and crush*” another part of the people. This is your way, is it, of *promoting union*? Your way of promoting union, your way of preaching “*peace and good will amongst men*”; your way of obeying the orders of your Master appears to be perfectly new. I mean your heavenly Master; for, as to the orders of your earthly master, you, no doubt, obey them in the common way. You must, doubtless, meet your flock with great satisfaction next Sunday, having laboured so hard during the week to draw forth one part of them “*effectually to defeat and crush the other part*!” But, *Gospel minister*, how do you manage it, supposing any of the “*desperate faction*” to be present? To call them your “*Dearly beloved Brethren*” would be rather inconsistent. —It is useless to say any more upon such a subject. The names,

however, may be of use; and, it is to be hoped, that the men, who may thus sign a paper, in which one part of the people are pretty plainly called upon to array themselves, in all manner of ways against the other part, will be remembered. This preacher of peace and good will amongst men leaves us not at all in doubt as to his principles and views. Rather than there should be a Reform, he would see the country torn to pieces. Verily *he* has his reasons. *He* is no fool. Those are the fools, who not having the reasons which he has, are induced to aid and assist in his undertaking. —I should like to be able to ascertain what are this man's *real* opinions with regard to what he is pleased to call “*a desperate faction*.” Does he think, now, I wonder, that such men as *Sir John Throgmorton*, *Mr. Goodlake*, *Mr. Hallett*, *Mr. Marsh*, *Mr. Vines*, *Dr. Valpy* (for he is for *reform* too;) does he really believe, that these are persons in *desperate* circumstances, and that the whole body of yeomen of the county of Berks, are in similar circumstances? I should like to know what has really passed, in his head, upon this subject. I hear what he *says*; but I should like to know what he *thinks*. —He is, I am told, *Dean of Canterbury*. How comes it, then, that the “*desperate faction*” was suffered, the other day, to prevail in that city? It appears, that a decided majority of that city are for a reform of parliament, and against the imprisonment of the people of England without trial and without oath made against them. Why did not the Dean, who now talks of “*a desperate faction*,” prevent that? Why did he not go and open his subscription book at Canterbury! —But, I wonder whether it be possible for even this infatuated or infuriated Gospel Minister to believe, that the part of the people, who call for Reform, is, “*desperate*,” and so contemptible as to be “*effectually defeated and crushed*” by the means that he and others like him are putting in motion. If he really does believe this, he is too far gone to be reasoned with; otherwise I would ask him WHO it is that has written “*BUR-DETT FOR EVER*” upon every wall and paling, not only in and about this immense metropolis: but in every city, town, village, and hamlet in the kingdom. If this Gospel Minister, or that other man of the “*Celestial Unction*,” brother O'Meara, will but take a trip into the country in any direction,

North, East, South, or West, they will find these words written upon every place which is conspicuous, and on which they can be written. Now, I would ask Messrs. Andrews, O'Meara, Bowles, or Beasley, *how* this can have been done by "a desperate faction," capable of being "effectually defeated and crushed" by vestry associations. The Devil, they will say, is on our side; aye, but that will not do; for, in that case, the blame lies with them, whose peculiar office it is to fight with and keep down the Devil. Messrs. O'Meara, Bowles, and Beasley, should have kept the Devil in check. There was a French Abbé (whose name I have now forgotten), who, some years ago, made a very good thing of writing about the *Anti-Christian Conspiracy*. What if Gerard Andrews were to apply the principles of that work to the present times, and make his political congregation believe, that such a conspiracy is now going on in England? In this way, he might account for the writing on the walls; but, even then, he must give up his assertion about the "faction" being "*desperate*."—Even then, he must give up the notion of the "faction" being a thing to be "effectually defeated and crushed" by a vestry association.—The truth is, that the really "*desperate* faction" are those, who oppose all reform, and the most desperate of them are those, who are now calling forth these counter-associations. These are really desperate; for, generally speaking, reform would sink them into their merited insignificance. The far greater part of them it would strip of the riches, which they have plundered from the public. To all such there can be no doubt that reform would be ruin. They, therefore, may well be thought *desperate*; and, indeed, is it not a proof of desperation, when we see a man, whose office it is to preach and inculcate Peace and Charity, coming forward, in the public prints, and, through the means of an advertisement, calling upon one part of the parishioners "effectually to defeat and crush the other part?" If this indecent act be not a proof of *desperation*, what is?—Those, on the contrary, who are for reform, have about them none of the marks or motives of desperation. They have *estates or trades or talents or strength to labour*. They depend upon resources that are *their own*. What, then, should make *them* desperate? They feel their burdens, and they also feel the insults of such men as Mr. Gerard An-

drewe; but, they have nothing to gain by reform, which would not be common to all their countrymen; while, on the other hand, there is no degree of *civil commotion* which must not be *injurious to them*.—

All this, however, the St. James's preacher of peace on earth, and good will towards men, knows, I dare say, full as well as any of us. But, as was before observed, he also knows, or fears, I imagine, that a reform in the House of Commons would not be favourable to *his* interests; and, if this be his opinion, it is not very unnatural in him to endeavour to cajole his parishioners into an association against reform, though it would be miserably foolish in them to be so cajoled. He must be aware of the *hatred* and *strife*, which his project, if successful, *must* create. This is what he cannot be ignorant of. He must be *certain*, that, in whatever degree his endeavours are attended with success, hatred and strife must be excited and kept up amongst his parishioners, to promote peace and harmony amongst whom is his bounden duty. Let the public judge, then, between him and those whom he has the insolence to denominate a "*desperate faction*."

NOTTINGHAM MEETING.—Here, too, I suppose, the Gospel Ministers will tell us that there was a "*desperate faction*." The Meeting, however, which took place on the 28th of May, appears to have been a most respectable one. As full an account as can possibly be got shall be inserted in the Register as soon as may be; but, I could not omit a notice of it this week, it is so honourable to all the parties concerned; and especially as it affords a proof (which I am well pleased to lay before my readers), that there are *Clergymen*, who, so far from acting the part of Gerard Andrews, have the virtue and courage to stand forward in defence of the rights and liberties of the people.—The Petition to the Honourable House was, upon this occasion, *moved* by a Clergyman. The report of the Proceedings states, that "The REV. MR. GRUNDY observed, that, at the request of several "Gentlemen, it fell to his lot to propose "and read the Petition to the House of "Commons, praying for a Reform in the "Representation of the People. His worthy friend, Mr. Denison, who preceded "him, had used so many able, eloquent, "and powerful arguments in favour of the "measure, that it became unnecessary for "him to address the Meeting at much



"length. He should, however, advert to
 "one or two points, relative to John Gale
 "Jones, and Sir Francis Burdett. It has
 "been said, that the people have no right to
 "interfere, previous to the trial, which is
 "to confirm, or deny the legality of their
 "imprisonment. The House of Com-
 "mons establish their right on precedent
 "and privilege, but no precedent, or
 "usage, can empower them to do wrong;
 "no usage can make that right, which is
 "illegal. There is a tendency in all
 "public bodies to be corrupt, and there-
 "fore, they should be narrowly watched.
 "The question is now resolved into one
 "of two alternatives; either we are to
 "have Reform conceded to us, or not.
 "If Reform, then are our Representatives
 "deputies to do our business, and not im-
 "prison us; they are our servants, not
 "our masters. If they claim the privi-
 "lege of putting us in prison, I propose,
 "that they shall also *represent us there*.
 "(Laughter and Applause.) If the alter-
 "native be not Reform, the absolute ne-
 "cessity of Reform cannot be depicted
 "in too glowing colours."—He said
 much more; but here is quite enough to
 answer the "Gospel Minister;" here is
 quite enough to answer Gerard Andrewes
 and John Bowles and brother Beazley.
 Brother O'Meara would not have said so
 much, I dare say; but, perhaps, the pub-
 lic will be full as much inclined to repose
 confidence in Mr. GRUNDY as in the man
 of "Celestial Uncion," whose "lips
 "were touched with the *live coal from the*
 "*altar*," and who preached before roy-
 alty *against Jacobins*, having obtained per-
 mission so to do through the patronage of
 a punk, who was, at that same time, sell-
 ing commissions in the army. Yes, the
 public will be, I imagine, full as much
 disposed to confide in the advice of Mr.
 Grundy as in that of any of these famous
 Anti-jacobins; these Abhorrrers; these
 preachers of peace, who are using the
 most desperate efforts to set the people
 together by the ears.—This conduct of
 Mr. Grundy and of some other clergymen,
 particularly at Cambridge, where they
 contributed their full share to the defeat
 and disgrace of the Teller of the Exchequer,
 will, I trust, preserve the respect of the
 people towards the Clergy, in spite of
 efforts like those of Gerard Andrewes, to
 whom I would recommend the perusal of
 the following *Address to Sir Francis Burdett*,
 agreed upon at this most respectable meet-
 ing, and when he has perused it let

him, once more, read over his own Ad-
 vertisement, and blush at its contents.—

"In a period of general depravity and
 "corruption, when all classes are more or
 "less the slaves of licentiousness and vice,
 "and from some, virtue seems almost to
 "have taken her flight, when private in-
 "terest almost universally predominates
 "over the public good, it requires no
 "common degree of firmness and integrity
 "to stand forth, and oppose the impetuous
 "torrent. In such circumstances, the
 "man is rarely to be found, who can at
 "once resist the temptations of wealth
 "and power, despise the taunts and ridi-
 "cule of those, who have sacrificed con-
 "science at the shrine of interest, brave
 "the threats of those, who strive to crush
 "all opposition with the iron hand of
 "power, smile at the frown of adversity,
 "and remain undaunted at the sight of
 "the walls of a prison. But rare as is the
 "discovery, we are willing to hope and
 "believe, that the people of England have
 "found such a man in you.—In this dearth
 "of public virtue, labouring under re-
 "peated disappointments, though not yet
 "sunk into despair, we naturally become
 "cautious in giving full credit to any
 "man, until his integrity has been tried,
 "and we have reason to believe that his
 "private conduct corresponds with his
 "public professions. From what we have
 "been able to learn of your private life,
 "the duties of the several relations in
 "which you stand to society, whether as
 "landlord, husband, father, or friend,
 "have been properly fulfilled. With the
 "greater confidence, therefore, we have
 "looked for a faithful discharge of your
 "public duties, nor have our expectations
 "been hitherto disappointed. When by
 "what is generally deemed a trifling
 "sacrifice of principle, you might have
 "basked in the sun-shine of prosperity,
 "you have chosen to weather the storms
 "of adversity, folded in the mantle of in-
 "tegrity.—At one time the object of ge-
 "neral odium, insulted by an infatuated
 "and misguided people, you shrunk not
 "from the field of duty to seek popular
 "applause. But at length, in a great
 "measure through your instrumentality,
 "the eyes of the people are opened, their
 "burdens have made them feel, and their
 "feelings have enlightened their under-
 "standings. They now see their real
 "friends, and are ready to offer their tri-
 "bute of gratitude to you. For your re-
 "cent conduct, for your firm stand in de-

"fence of the Liberties and Rights of Britons accept our unqualified thanks. But gratifying as the expression of the approbation of your fellow-subjects must necessarily be to your feelings, we trust that you possess a much higher source of gratification in the approbation of your own conscience. Go on, Sir, in your honourable career. No effort is lost. Let us not in this instance suffer disappointment. So shall the virtuous part of your fellow-subjects revere and love you, and the blessing of him, that was ready to perish, shall come upon you."

—The Mayor of Nottingham called this Meeting; he gave his approbation of its object; an Alderman presided as chairman; the petition was proposed by a Clergyman: and yet, perhaps, Gerard will have the insolence to tell us, that this Meeting was made up of men belonging to "a desperate faction." — One cannot read these Addresses without looking back, at every step, to the debates upon the subject of the commitment to the Tower, Mr. WILBERFORCE, who, be it borne in mind, was for *reprimanding* Sir Francis, said, that if sent to the Tower, he would be *issuing his inflammatory letters thence*; and so said Mr. PONSONBY. How much deceived they were! What? Did they imagine, then, that he was going to a sort of state that would dispose his mind to weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth? The situation of Sir Francis is not calculated to excite angry and uneasy feelings. Little did Messrs. Wilberforce and Ponsonby imagine, that his time would be so much taken up with the receiving and the answering of Addresses! Little, alas! did they imagine this, when they talked of his *issuing of his publications from the Tower*! Little did Mr. Wilberforce imagine, that he himself would be requested to assist at the carrying up of an Address to the man, whom he voted for *reprimanding*; but, this is, I understand, very likely to be the case. — Aye, in spite of Gerard Andrewes and John Bowles, and such like people, the cause of Reform will triumph. There is nothing but *precipitancy* on the part of its advocates that can defeat their views. I, therefore, conclude here, as I have done upon so many former occasions, admonishing the friends of Reform to avoid *haste* as they would avoid destruction; to be cool and considerate in all their proceedings; and never to suffer themselves to be hurried into resentful acts, into acts of violence of any sort, by

the malice and calumnies of their foes. I trust, that no attempt will be made to form any CLUBS or ASSOCIATIONS, which, though their object might be good, would be sure to afford a handle for misrepresentation. Let all be *open*; all *public*; all in a legal and constitutional way, in form as well as in substance; and, if, in the end *violence*, of whatever sort it may be, does come, let it, for God's sake, come from our enemies, who are also the greatest enemies of the kingly government and of the family upon the throne.

N. B. I did intend to insert an article upon the nefarious attempt to assassinate the DUKE OF CUMBERLAND; and also upon the fearful prospect of the WHEAT-CROP, which, unless timely precautions be taken, will, in my opinion, expose the country to most awful calamities; but, as I wish to do justice to both subjects, I must postpone them till next week. — I cannot, however, help observing, with respect to the latter, that I hope the ministers will, *in time*, take care to *secure* supplies of wheat from the Continent of Europe, and to *keep it in hand till winter*; for, from very extensive information, I give it as my decided opinion, that NOT ONE HALF SO MUCH WHEAT WILL BE GROWN THIS YEAR AS WAS GROWN LAST YEAR; and, it is well known, that last year's was a short crop. I am of opinion, that *one eighth* part, or thereabouts, of all the wheat land is actually *ploughed up*; and that not more than *half* or, at most, *two thirds* of the ground is covered of that which is *not ploughed up*. — Such being the prospect, every thing should be done, that can be done, to secure a supply of wheat from the continent of Europe; and the sooner it is set about the better.

W^m. COBBETT.

London, 8th June, 1810.

RESOLUTIONS, PETITIONS, REMONSTRANCES, &c. on the LIBERTY OF THE SUBJECT and PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, 1810.

BERKSHIRE MEETING.

On Tuesday the 5th inst. a most numerous and respectable Meeting of the Freeholders of the county of Berks was held at the Town Hall in Reading, Peter Green, esq. the High-Sheriff of the County, in the Chair, who addressed the Meeting, and requested of them to consider their own dignity, by giving every Gentleman, however his opinions might happen to differ from their own, a fair and equal hearing (applauses.)

Sir JOHN THROGMORTON then came forward and addressed the Meeting. He began by observing, that the circumstances mentioned in the requisition of the imprisonment of Mr. Jones and sir F. Burdett, were fresh in the recollection of all who heard him. Mr. G. Jones had been imprisoned, because that in exercising the right of discussing the conduct of our Representatives, he had reflected upon the conduct not of the House of Commons, but of a member in that House. Mr. Jones had had the boldness to disapprove of Mr. Yorke's shutting the gallery; and because he had ventured to object to the conduct of one of their members, the House of Commons had sent him to Newgate. The question arising out of this was of no small moment; it was, whether privilege, as it was called, was not only power, but a power above, beyond, and contrary to the known law of the land; for if any tribunal whatever really possessed the mysterious and indefinite power of sending whom they pleased, and for what offence they pleased, to imprisonment without trial—if there was in England such a power, then he had no hesitation in saying, that there was an end to the liberties of the country—(applauses). But by what analogy could such a power be said to exist?—Go to the highest authorities in the realm, examine the nature of their proceedings, and where would they find any thing like the assumption of such a power? Where would they find any thing so arbitrary, so opposite to the true spirit of the constitution, as condemnation without trial, and punishment without conviction? (applauses.) If the House of Commons had been libelled, the law gave them their remedy; in every other case of alledged libel the accused was not hurried to immediate punishment because his accuser said that it was a libel (applauses); in every other case of offence imputed to an English subject, punishment did not go hand in hand with the accusation—it did not go before the conviction of crime, but followed it (applauses.) But it had been contended, that those privileges were for the protection of the people; this might be a true position, and if so, it would be rather difficult to persuade the people that the privilege of imprisoning them at discretion was all the time a privilege for the benefit of the people (laughter and applause.) But these privileges must operate either against the people or against the crown; they had proofs how effectually they could be

brought to bear against the people, but what were they against the crown? Nothing.—Suppose that the House of Commons and the crown happened unfortunately to be at variance, this he admitted to be a most improbable supposition, but in such a case he contended, that the House would have no power to imprison; suppose the person ordered into custody should in such circumstances resist, the Speaker and Serjeant might go and endeavour to execute the warrant, but would one single constable stir in obedience to it? Was it likely that the King would, in the case he had supposed, call out his constables, his magistrates, his army, to act against himself.—(Applauses.) The House of Commons could never carry their warrant into effect in case of resistance, but by the aid of the King; so that their boasted privilege, that existed but for the benefit of the people, was against the people a formidable, because undefined power, but against the crown was a mere dead letter. (Applauses.) But how had the House acted since the late instances of exercising this extraordinary power? Had they not ever since proceeded in such a manner as proved that they themselves entertained serious doubts of the legality of what they had done. Debates after debates upon the question, whether they were justified in the measures they had previously adopted? They act first, and deliberate afterwards; they first exercise a most extraordinary power, and then they fall to debate, whether they were warranted in the exercise of it.—(Applauses.) How anxious have they been ever since that period in the hunt of old precedents to justify their looking in every quarter, even ransacking the drawers of dead Judges of private opinions that never were given in judgment; and after all their researches—after all their high language of being above, or independent of every other Court, we found their Speaker pleading at the bar of one of those very Courts, of which they affect to be so independent. But the truth was, that these inconsistencies were of themselves a proof that the House was in error, since such were uniformly the consequence of error accompanied by a blind obstinacy to continue in it. He trusted, however, that the effect produced upon the public mind by the conduct of the present House of Commons, would operate as a salutary lesson to every future one, and make them more cautious how they commit themselves in an unnatural con-

test with their Constituents. (Applauses.) He would there beg leave to say one word upon the subject of the Counter Declarations. He should not now comment upon what proportion those Counter-resolutionists bore to the general sense of the different places where they had appeared; he had understood there had been even a Counter Declaration to a vestry-meeting in St. George's Parish, (Laughter.) This, however, he would say, that he had observed with pleasure, that however those Counter Declarations differed from them upon other subjects, they all agreed as to the absolute necessity of some Reform in the state of the Representation. (Applauses.) He was sorry, however, to see that some of them went so far as to impute improper motives to those who differed with them upon other points—this they had no right to do; they had said that those who differed from them wished to bring the House of Commons into contempt. Such had never been his wish; he thought an House of Commons a most efficient branch of the Legislature, and the best and firmest bulwark of the liberties of the people. He should always wish to see the people looking to it with unabated confidence, as the honest and zealous guardian of their rights and property. The sentiment he felt towards the House of Commons was rather one of regret than of contempt. He felt upon their recent conduct as he would have done upon the defection of a friend whom he had long trusted—as a child would at the unjustifiable rigour of a parent (Applauses.) The House had treated them ill; they did not despise them for having done so, but they could not help regretting it. But this objection could be easily answered. If the House of Commons did its duty—if they proved themselves the vigilant guardians of the public purse—the unwearied prosecutor of all public abuses; the relentless foe of all public peculators, be their rank or connexions what they might; if they shewed themselves at all times eager to detect and punish every attempt to barter their Representation; if they did all this, it would be a vain attempt, to try to bring them into contempt, for it would be impossible to do so (Loud applauses.) But, as they now stood, could their warmest advocate say that they expressed the sense of the people? Did they express that sense when they refused to proceed against Lord Castle-reagh, for attempting to barter a seat in their House for a writership? (Cries of No, no.) Did they express the sense of

the people when, upon a subsequent charge of selling Seats in that House, they vindicated themselves by the defence, that such a practice was “as notorious as the sun at noon day?” Did they express the sense of the people when they acquitted the then Commander in Chief of all knowledge of, or connivance at, certain corrupt practices which were proved beyond a doubt at their bar? (applauses)—or, to give but one instance more, did they express the sense of the people when they refused to censure the Ministers who had sent out our armies to perish in Walcheren, but had even the boldness to approve of their conduct? No, they not only in such instances did not express the sense of the people, but the very opposite of that sense. And to what other source was this wide difference between the people and their representatives to be traced but to that of the faulty state of the Representation? (Applauses.) Indeed, it could not be otherwise, when it was known, that a great majority of that House was returned to Parliament by a one hundred and seventieth part of the male population paying taxes; that 84 individuals sent 157 members to that House; and that 150 more were sent by the nomination of 70 powerful individuals, so that 154 patrons sent a decided majority to that Honourable House. Such circumstances must indeed have the effect of making them an easy prey to the artful, and a ready purchase for the wealthy. A Reform, a moderate Reform, brought about by temperate and constitutional means, must be the object of every rational man who loved the Constitution. He wished for nothing rash: nothing intemperate; and those Counter-resolutionists had no right to impute as the motives that actuated his conduct, objects which, of all others, he was the most anxious to defeat. So far was he from promoting popular outrage, that he should take the most effectual means to defeat it; and when the people demanded what they had a right to, he thought that the best means to prevent commotion, was to concede to them what they so justly demanded.—Could that House of Commons be radically right, that for so long a time spoke a language directly opposite to the real sentiments of the people? He knew that the House of Commons had been, till lately, the organ of the real sentiments of the people, but no one could deny that they had not been so, at least for the last two years—no man would have the confidence to say that they spoke the senti-

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such as had not even a house over their heads. The Clergy and Freeholders were all that were accustomed to vote on such occasions, and why invite the inhabitants under so vague a denomination? On the same principle they might call on all the paupers in the county to attend. He meant no disrespect to the lowest man in the county; he spoke only with respect to the principle, and no man would contend that every inhabitant was to have a voice at a County Meeting. The grand object for which they had met he conceived to be twofold, the imprisonment of Sir F. Burdett and John Gale Jones, by the Legislature. He complimented the worthy Baronet on the constitutional speech he had made, which must, in his opinion, be approved by every friend of the King, the Commons, and the Country. —The worthy Baronet, however, had said, that no man would come forward to oppose openly and honestly the measures proposed, but those who did not approve, withdrew into corners and vestries to give room for the expression of their sentiments. It might be so that some might deliver their opinions in vestries, and he saw no more harm in this than in delivering their opinions in council chambers, (which, he believed, had been the case in this county). (A partial laugh). The great reason of his presenting himself to the meeting on this occasion, was to shew that he could openly avow his opinion, and that he was not disposed to skulk into any corner, in the honest and candid declaration of his sentiments. He was happy to hear the sentiments avowed by the letter of their worthy representative, Mr. C. Dundas, because they would be the best argument he could offer in favour of his own. That hon. gent. had declined giving any opinion on the subject of Sir Francis Burdett's imprisonment, as the affair was now pending before a legal tribunal. This was precisely his own objection to any interference on the subject. The question was still at issue, and it did not become them to anticipate the decision of the law. But were they to anticipate the question, he would ask if the Legislature of the country was to be insulted at pleasure, without having any means of redress, except appealing to a Court of Law, to an inferior Court? You say otherwise there would be an end to our liberties; but I say that there would thus be an end to all order and legislation. The House of Commons ought to have the power of supporting its own dignity, without resorting to

any other Court. Whether they legally have that power or not is now a question before another Court, and now waits a decision. He would say, however, that if they have it not, they ought to have it. Reform was the second part of the question now before them, and on this subject he would not altogether deny the grounds of complaint that were made. That there was improper influence in the House of Commons, he readily allowed [Applauses]; but who were to blame for this? It was the people themselves. The means of Reform were in their own hand [No, No]. Why did they send such men to Parliament? [The People do not send them.] He had no objection that there should be more voters than there now were; but against universal suffrage, if they meant that, he must enter his decided protest. In adverting to the rotten boroughs, he contended, that the man who paid 4 or 5,000*l.* for his seat was as likely to do his duty as the man that came in by flattering the people [Murmurs] and by means of bribing [some expressions of applause]. He allowed that men holding *pensions, places, and sinecure offices, ought not to have a vote in the House of Commons*; but it was necessary, he contended, that placemen should be there, and though he might refuse such men a vote, he would not have them excluded from the House.—(Considerable applause.)—He would not give his assent to the first Petition that had been proposed, because the measure, he thought, was premature. There was a doubt on the subject between the first law authorities, and why should they take on themselves to decide the question?—When Lawyers disagreed, was it for them to step forward and decide the question? He admitted the overwhelming power of Ministers to carry any question to be an evil, but this evil did not arise, he contended, from the mode of representation, but from the influence that Ministers naturally had from the situations they occupied.

Mr. HALLETT said, that the subject having already been before them, twice at Abingdon and here, and he having on those occasions expressed his sentiments, he did not think it necessary to detain them long by any thing he could now offer; the worthy Gentleman had said, that they were wrong in calling the inhabitants; but such he thought was the important question, that every man who paid taxes had a right to express his opinion and to be heard. [Mr. Golding here

explained; he said, he did not complain of people being called who paid taxes, but of the people being invited who paid no taxes, as was actually the case by inviting all the inhabitants, which he had argued was unconstitutional.]

MR. HALLETT continuing, observed, that the worthy Gentleman had admitted that all those paying taxes ought to have a voice, and he would ask, where is the person that does not pay taxes?—(A laugh and applause.) I am sure, if there are any such in this Hall, they will have no objection to withdraw. The Gentleman has stated, that the question of privilege is now before a Court of Law, and we have nothing to do with it. Were they to be deprived of their personal liberty without inquiry? Were they to be deprived of the right of Trial by Jury without opening their mouths against it (loud applause.) Was the present a time to deprive the people of their rights when so formidable an enemy had over-run the whole of Europe, not more by his arms than the corruptions and oppressions of the Governments he had subdued? (Applause.) That the House of Commons had a right to some degree of privilege he would admit; that they had a right to remove all obstructions to their proceedings was undoubted, but this privilege was never intended to be given them for the indulgence of spleen and passion. They were the same as a Magistrate in similar cases. Suppose I am a Magistrate and meet with any obstruction in the regular exercise of my duty, I would certainly issue out a warrant and imprison, but I would admit the party to bail, that he might be legally tried. It was a first principle that no man ought to be judge in his own cause. The House of Commons had acted precipitately, and so much was he persuaded of this, that he had no doubt, were it to be done again, many of them would vote otherwise than they had at first done. To make any law binding on the subject, the whole of the Legislature was necessary—the King, Lords, and Commons; but here the House of Commons came forward to make a law for themselves. They claimed a privilege which they admitted to be undefined, and still more, which they said was undefinable.—(A laugh.) This privilege they exercised against the people, who, properly speaking, were themselves. Instead of claiming it as a means of resisting the Crown, they claimed it against the people. The King might as well employ

an armed force to take Windsor, his own property, as the House of Commons declare war against the people (Applause.) He was persuaded the King did not know what was preparing. There were people who employed the King's name without having his sanction. The avenues to the Throne were shut by Ministers. The Petition of the City of London was not permitted to be presented to his Majesty, because it was alledged he was blind. But did it follow because he was blind that he was deaf also? Might not the petition have been read to him? But this would have been too much. How was it to be expected that persons would read to him their own condemnation—that those who wished to preserve his Royal ear would read to him facts against themselves that he might not have heard? Expecting such a service as this, from Ministers, would be like requesting a man who had a blind master, to read to that master an unfavourable description of his character, at the moment he was expecting a new place, or some increase of wages for his faithful services (a laugh.) He believed the House of Commons had already too many privileges, without claiming any other. They had the high and dignified privilege of not paying their debts and of cheating their honest creditors. That they might be free to discharge their Parliamentary duty, and to give their votes in the House on any occasion, he would admit that such a privilege might be necessary during the Session of Parliament, but surely there could be no occasion for the extension of such a privilege beyond the Session, unless for the precise purpose of defrauding their creditors. Why were they not to be seized, like any other men, as soon as the Session was over? Their imprisonment during the recess could not prevent their voting, and therefore their boasted privilege could be looked only as the means of defrauding some honest industrious creditor (Loud applause.) They claimed privileges of such high and political importance, that no country could be safe to grant them. They wished to be set above the law, while the people, at the same time, were not to be informed of the extent of their claims. Had Sir Francis Burdett shot the Serjeant at Arms when breaking into his house, and consequently been called before a Criminal Court to answer for the murder; and had Lord Ellenborough, or any other Judge said, that the Jury were to decide on the murder, but not to enquire

whether the breaking open of the house was right or wrong, as that was a case they could not decide on by law, being connected with the privileges of the House of Commons; what would a Jury in this case have done? He could not answer for others, but had he himself been one of the Jury on such an occasion, he would have told him that they must take the fact into consideration. They did not know all the law books that had been written, but they knew Magna Charta. He deprecated the reflections and language that had been thrown out against persons advocating the cause of reform.—He took his information from the newspapers only; and judging from them, it appeared that persons asking for reform, were a weak, despicable crew, in the language of Mr. Canning, “too weak to be feared, and too contemptible to be dangerous.”—He did not wish to wage a war of recrimination, but he had not taken up the first stone. He would ask Mr. Canning what were the men he had associated with, and what company he had kept? Among the first, they found Lord Melville; then John Bowles; then Mr. Villiers, a very loyal man no doubt; and then Mr. Hunt, who had fled the kingdom, after plundering the Public Treasury. Such were the crew that Mr. Canning had associated with, and whose robberies, Mr. Perceval was so delicate as to call a *misapplication* of the public money. What were they to think of this mild and softened term? If any man had a servant who ran away with his treasure, would he call that a misapplication of his money instead of a robbery? What would they think of a person coming to that bar, which was a Court of Justice, accused of having picked his neighbour's pocket, who should say that he had only misapplied a little of his neighbour's money: people might employ what means they pleased, but for his own part he would declare eternal war against such misappliers. They say we wish to degrade all public men, but what motive can I have for doing so? I have no room to be dissatisfied; I want nothing. The truth is, they degrade themselves by their conduct. We shall willingly, however, forget the past, if they will now raise themselves and pursue a line of conduct that will entitle them to the public esteem. His dislike to many public men was, that their professions out of office were so different from their practice when in office. Mr. Bankes, in the House of Commons, had admitted that the influence of the

Crown had very much increased, and yet did not wish to deprive the Crown of any of its present advantages. I do not wish either, Sir, to deprive the Crown of any of its advantages, but I do not wish to see a privilege arrogated by the House of Commons that may become an instrument in the hands of any corrupt or profligate Minister to oppress the people. He believed Sir F. Burdett to be a very worthy and indeed exemplary man, and his whole political life had hitherto shewn him so. He had been accused of wishing the cursed leaves to be torn out of the Red Book, as if he wished to destroy the King and our Constitution, the army and navy, and the whole establishment. But this by no means followed. There were some useful leaves in the Red Book, which no man would wish to have torn out, but there were also, it must be admitted, cursed leaves in that book. [He had one in his pocket, which he here produced.] I will shew you one cursed leaf. Here is one in which we have Mr. Hunt receiving so much of the public money, not for duties performed, but to give him an opportunity of plundering the public. This is no new opinion. It was said before, by Mr. Burke and Mr. Dunning, who had complained of the increase of the Red Book, and the consequent increase of the influence of the Crown. He here exhibited, as a proof of this assertion, three different Red Books, during a period of fifty years. The first contained only 155 pages, the second 272, and pages, too, of a large magnitude; while the third, that of 1810, contained 395 pages, which was, during fifty years, an increase of 240 pages, besides a large appendix that had been published this year, though not by public authority, and which contained as many pages itself as the original Red Book. He did not mean, by speaking in this way, to condemn all the leaves in the Red Book, but amid so great and rapid an increase, how many cursed leaves must there be, and on a review of the book, who could not point out some leaf, nay, many leaves of this description?—Had the people been properly represented, such leaves, he was confident, would never have existed.—With respect to Parliamentary Reform, who could deny its necessity, when they saw to what purposes a seat in the House of Commons was applied? Every man in Parliament who had a son in the navy must have a ship for him, and this was only to be had by voting with the Minis-

ter. The system was bad, and what therefore were they to expect from individuals who went into Parliament under the influence of such a system. The decayed boroughs were considered as so much personal property, and it was contended, that if abolished, they ought to be paid for. Of two evils he should certainly choose the least, and would therefore rather pay for them, at the same time, at the public expence, than not have them abolished; but at the same time, as the possession was illegal and unconstitutional, he saw no reason for any compensation. A man living on the coast, where smuggling had formerly been carried on, to a considerable amount, might as well plead for compensation, now that smuggling was more strictly prevented. In the Borough of Reading, it was true, that no person could dictate to them, but in those rotten Boroughs the proprietor could send up whom he pleased, even Mr. Charles Yorke, who would get admission no where else. (Loud Applause.)

DR. VALPY then addressed the Meeting. He proposed in the Meeting the necessity of hearing every man, and was afraid that the proposition he meant to submit might not meet with universal approbation. Nothing, however, should deter him from declaring his sentiments. They might hiss him, but he hoped they would hear him. The first petition, as it now stood, he could not sign, and had refused to do so at a Meeting of the Borough. He admitted that the House might not be warranted in the commitment of Gale Jones, but his opinion was very different with respect to Sir F. Burdett. The House, he contended, had a power over its own Members, and therefore he trusted, as an amendment, that the name of Sir F. Burdett be left out of the Petition, in as many places as that name occurs. He condemned Sir F. Burdett, and some of his friends, for shewing so much indifference respecting persons in power. This he did the more, as every day of the present Administration was adding calamity to the country.—What were they to expect from men who had professedly come into power on so unchristian and uncharitable principles, depriving one-fourth of their fellow-citizens of their civil rights, on account of their religion. He never thought with such an unauspicious commencement, that they could or would come to good. He then went into a history of their administration, and of the conduct

of their late campaigns, which entailed so much misery and disgrace on the country. He confessed that it was his wish to see lord Grenville, lord Grey, and such men as them in power, from whose talents and well known principles some good might be expected. He concluded by repeating his amendment, and was listened to through the whole of his speech with the greatest attention, though not always approved. He had been used to be against Parliamentary Reform, but the experience of the last few years had taught him the necessity of it. It was not so much Reform they wanted as *Restoration*.

A Gentleman, whose name we did not learn, urged strongly the necessity of unanimity as the best defence they could offer against their implacable enemy. It was on this ground that he wished to see a Reform in Parliament, and that he should give his support to both of the petitions. Buonaparté was a formidable enemy, but domestic corruption was still more so. With respect to lord Grenville and his friends, he did not see that they did any thing when formerly in power, except raise the income tax. (Applause.)

MR. H. MARSH supported the two Petitions, and the object for which the Meeting had been called. He denied that the people had the power of correcting a corrupt House of Commons in their own hands, when it was considered what a small number of electors there were compared with the great body of the people, and how great a number were returned by interests quite different from those of the people. He was glad that gentlemen had been patiently heard on both sides, and thought the Meeting indebted to the worthy gentleman (Mr. Golding) who had stood forward in so open and manly a manner to declare his sentiments. He believed if the great body of the people had it every where in their power to vote in elections, they would be found uniformly to act as the people of Cambridge lately had done.

SIR J. THROGMORTON opposed the amendment (Dr. Valpy's), as the House, he conceived, had no controul over its Members acting out of the House, except to expel them.

MR. BICHENO supported the Petitions.

MR. VINES observed, that it would be more dangerous to give the House an unbounded controul over its own Members, than over any other class of people, as the majority of the House, in that case, might

always imprison the minority, so that all opposition might be ever legally suppressed. (Applauses.)

MR. WATTS seconded Dr. Valpy's amendment, to leave out the name of Sir F. Burdett (No, no!) Every man, he contended, ought to be subject to the rules of the society of which he is a member.

SIR MOSES XIMENES expressed himself decidedly against the Petitions, but having been for three hours buffeted and pushed about in the crowd, he felt himself too exhausted to address them at length. As the worthy knight was a Declarator, as they called him, some symptoms of disapprobation were shewn, but, on the whole, the Meeting were disposed to hear him.

The HIGH SHERIFF then put the question on the Amendment, which was negatived with the exception of five or six hands held up in its favour.

The Petition for the liberation of Mr. Gale Jones and Sir Francis Burdett was then carried amid loud bursts of applause; about ten or twelve hands were held up against it. The Petition for Reform, on the question being put, was also carried in the same manner; three or four hands were held up against it.

Sir JOHN THROGMORTON then stepped forward and proposed the following Resolution, which was carried amidst bursts of applause.

"Resolved, That the Petitions now read be adopted, and signed by the High Sheriff in the name of the County, and delivered to the Members for this County, George Vansittart and Charles Dundas, Esqrs. who are requested to present the same to the House of Commons, and are hereby instructed to support the same therein."

He then proposed the following Address to Sir F. Burdett, which was read by the Deputy Sheriff.

"Reading, June 5, 1810.

"Sir; We feel great pleasure and satisfaction in conveying to you in the name of the Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, Householders, and other Inhabitants of the County of Berks, in full County assembled, their sentiments of gratitude and attachment for your generous exertions in defending the cause of the poor, the helpless, and the oppressed; for your unwearied endea-

vours in exposing and attacking Corruption and Abuses in the Navy, the Army, and the State; for your unabated zeal upon all occasions, in maintaining with firmness the Liberty, Property, and Rights of the People, in opposition to the pernicious system which is undermining and destroying the Country; and, above all, for your unremitted efforts to obtain a full, fair, free and equal Representation of the People in Parliament; which, more than any language in your Letter to your Constituents, the Electors of Westminster, have excited the acrimony of all those who, by participating in the misplaced millions of their country, naturally rank you among their enemies. In you we have had an upright and an honest man—a firm, zealous, and inflexible friend to our free Constitution as by law established. We are, Sir, with the greatest respect and sincerity, your obliged humble servants, &c."

Sir JOHN then moved the following Resolution, which was unanimously carried.

"Resolved, That the Letter now read, addressed to Sir F. Burdett, Bart. be adopted; that it be signed by the High-Sheriff in the name of the Meeting, and that the High-Sheriff, the Members, and as many Gentlemen as think proper, be requested to wait upon and present the same to Sir F. Burdett, together with a copy of these Resolutions."

He concluded by moving: "Resolved, That these Resolutions be inserted in the Reading, Salisbury, and Oxford papers; and in the following London papers, The Morning Herald, The Morning Chronicle, The Alfred, The Star, and The Statesman."

Dr. Valpy moved the Thanks of the Meeting to the High-Sheriff, which was carried by acclamation. The Thanks of the Meeting were also voted to Sir John Throgmorton and Mr. Goodlake, for the able assistance they had given on the occasion.—We have seldom seen a public meeting conducted with more good-humour and decorum, or in which more indulgence was given to a small minority. In no instance was party feeling permitted to violate personal respect. The High-Sheriff dissolved the Meeting about five o'clock, having continued nearly four hours.